

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace page 1, lines 8 through 16 with the following amendment:

This is a divisional of pending application Serial No. 08/931,855 filed September 16, 1997 which This is a continuation-in-part application of ~~co-pending~~ Ser. No. 563,732, filed Nov. 28, 1995, now abandoned, which is a division of Ser. No. 049,531, filed Apr. 20, 1993, Pat. No. 5,470,720, which is a division of Ser. No. 344,237, filed Apr. 26, 1989, Pat. No. 5,204,259, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 191,229, filed May 6, 1988, abandoned, Ser. No. 206,499, filed June 13, 1988, abandoned and Ser. No. 258,016, filed Oct. 14, 1988, abandoned; and of co-pending Ser. No. 272,271, filed Jul. 8, 1994, which is a continuation of Ser. No. 616,369, filed Nov. 21, 1990, abandoned, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 573,643, filed Aug. 27, 1990, abandoned; the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace page 2, lines 8 through 12 with the following amendment:

The present invention overcomes the difficulties by providing a simple and highly efficient expression system that allows for the production of large quantities of antigens. The invention relies on the efficient expression resulting from the inclusion of the nucleotide sequence AGGAGGGTTTTTCAT (which corresponds to nucleotides 1-15 of SEQ ID NO.:1) directly upstream from the ATG codon which marks the start of

translation.

Please replace page 4, lines 16 through 19 with the following amendment:

The present invention is directed to recombinant expression vectors which comprise a first nucleic acid having the sequence AGGAGGGTTTTTCAT (which corresponds to nucleotides 1-15 of SEQ ID NO.:1) operatively linked to a second nucleic acid having a sequence encoding an HIV or HCV antigen.

Please replace page 5, lines 34 through 35 with the following amendment:

The method of ~~Claim 15~~, wherein said detecting in step (c) can further comprise the steps of:

Please replace page 10, lines 24 through 26 with the following amendment:

A DNA segment of the present invention comprises a first nucleotide base sequence that defines a ribosome binding site and has a sequence by the formula:

AGGAGGGTTTTTCAT (which corresponds to nucleotides 1-15 of SEQ ID NO.:1).